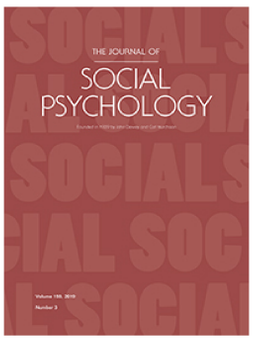

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Negative stereotypes as motivated justifications for moral exclusion

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ABSTRACT

We investigated the connection between moral exclusion of outgroups and on the one hand, right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), and social dominance orientation (SDO) on the other. We assumed that both RWA and SDO would increase the tendency to place other groups out of the scope of justice. However, we also tested whether negative stereotypes about an outgroup's threatening and norm-violating misbehavior would serve as a justification for moral exclusion. These assumptions were tested in connection with Roma, Jewish, and Muslim people as target groups in the Hungarian context (N = 441). In line with our hypotheses, we found that both RWA and SDO had an indirect effect on moral exclusion mediated by negative stereotypes about the particular target group. Our findings suggested that negative stereotypes were more important legitimizing factors for RWA than for SDO. Our results highlight the benefits of interpreting the process of moral exclusion as an outcome of motivated social cognition.

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Moral exclusion; motivated social cognition; negative stereotyping; right-wing authoritarianism; social dominance orientation

A decision about accepting refugees or shutting them out, a decision about providing financial support to a country suffering an economic breakdown or introducing sanctions to them are some of the important decisions Europe faces today. These decisions are not made on the basis of economic considerations only, but have to do with moral decisions about inclusion and exclusion as well. People are willing to make sacrifices only for the sake of those individuals and groups that they reckon as a member of their personal moral community (Deutsch, 1985; Opotow, 1990; Singer, 1981). In accordance with this interpretation, it seems that it has become a question of primary importance for numerous nations in the Western world where to mark the limits of their own moral community. In this paper we claim that this process of moral exclusion-inclusion is not an impartial process, but a result of identifiable motivational goals and motivated justifications.

Moral exclusion and intergroup relations

People feel obliged to behave in accordance with the most important moral principles and rules of justice only with those they consider members of their personal moral community. It means that this community is enclosed by moral boundaries (Deutsch, 1973; Singer, 1981). The right for fair treatment and the entitlement for support and help is acknowledged and respected for the members of the moral community as they are within one's personal scope of justice. However, if a person or group is excluded from this personal scope of justice, immoral or unjust acts towards them become acceptable or even desirable (e.g. Opotow, 1990, 1993, 1995, 2012; Staub, 1989). In this sense, moral exclusion can be the last precondition for the most severe forms of intergroup discrimination and violence (Lima-Nunes, Pereira, & Correia, 2013a; Opotow, 2012; Staub, 1990).

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Groups that are perceived to represent a potential obstacle to achieving the goals of the ingroup are the most likely victims of moral exclusion. These groups are considered a potential source of threat to the well-being of the ingroup, and therefore, harsh measures against them are justified, as they serve to eliminate the threat against the ingroup (Lima-Nunes, Pereira, & Correia, 2013b). Because the harsh treatment of these groups are justified through moral exclusion, moral exclusion actually enables people to maintain their self-concept as a fair and just person with a well-developed moral character (Bandura, 1999, 2016). Treating members of threatening outgroups in inhuman ways doesn't count as unjust or immoral because they are unworthy for moral considerations and are therefore excluded from the scope of justice (Deutsch, 1990; Lima-Nunes et al., 2013b). Therefore, rival or threatening outgroups are especially at risk of being placed outside the scope of justice (Opotow, 1993, 2012).

A wide range of strategies can be applied to justify unjust and immoral acts towards others for the purpose of maintaining one's moral character. These include denying the severity of the consequences of inhuman acts against them, or emphasizing its necessity with a higher ideological purpose (see Bandura, 2016; Opotow, 1990; Opotow & Weiss, 2000; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2010). Many of these justifying techniques are based on the perceived characteristics of the particular victim group. Perpetrators claim that members of the target group either possess a certain characteristic or committed (or intends to commit) something that makes this group deserving to be excluded from the scope of justice.

Negative stereotypes and prejudice toward the target group can be particularly effective in this process: the belief of the morally substandard characteristic as an essential feature of a group authorizes the exclusion of members of that group from the scope of justice. Coryn and Borshuk (2006) found that moral exclusion of Muslims was often justified by perceiving Muslims as potential terrorists and malevolent enemies who threaten American society. Lima-Nunes and colleagues (2013a) found that prejudice against immigrants was a strong predictor of moral exclusion in Brazil. Similarly, Passini and Morselli (2017) found that moral exclusion strongly correlated with both blatant and subtle prejudice against immigrants as well as with modern racism.

Authoritarianism, prejudice, and moral exclusion

Although approval of negative stereotypes is socially shared (Allport, 1954; Katz & Braly, 1933), it is also a direct consequence of personal motivations derived from people's psychological characteristics. Authoritarianism is one of these central psychological characteristics reflecting a desire for security, order, unquestioning obedience, and a need for structured lines of authority (see Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Allport, 1954; Altemeyer, 1981, 1998).

Motivations related to authoritarianism are important antecedents of intergroup prejudice according to seven decades of research. The most important motivations identified by classical studies of authoritarianism are personal need for security, predictability, and certainty (e.g. Adorno et al., 1950; Allport, 1954; Rokeach, 1960). According to these early theories, the authoritarian person tends to adhere to the most dominant social and cultural norms—as well as to submit to conventional authorities—and devaluate outgroups that contradict these norms. Altemeyer (1998) refined this assumption by arguing that this pattern of symptoms describes only *"submissive" (right-wing) authoritarianism* while there is another *dominant* type of authoritarianism with the predominant motivation of achieving social domination over others. This notion was built on *social dominance theory* that describes achieving group-based dominance as an evolutionarily effective way for enhancing group-efficiency (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The central concept of the theory is social dominance orientation (SDO), which is a generalized preference for group-based hierarchy and the maintenance of intergroup inequalities (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius, Cotterill, Sheehy-Skeffington, Kteily, & Carvacho, 2015).

More recently, Duckitt and colleagues (e.g. Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007, 2009, 2010a) outlined the *dual-process model of prejudice* and argued that most of our intergroup and ideological

beliefs can be traced back to one of two overarching attitudinal clusters, either to right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) or SDO. Since these two clusters have their distinct motivational backgrounds, they predict prejudice towards somewhat different outgroups. As RWA is based on the motivation to live in a secure and predictable social environment, it primarily predicts negative views about groups that threaten the most important norms and conventions of the ingroup. SDO, on the other hand, is based on the motivation to achieve and maintain the group's dominant position, and it consequently predicts prejudice against groups that are perceived either as inferior or as a competitor for status (e.g. Asbrock, Sibley, & Duckitt, 2010; Cantal, Milfont, Wilson, & Gouveia, 2015; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007; Hadarics & Kende, 2017; Sibley, Harding, Perry, Asbrock, & Duckitt, 2010).

Groups can also be perceived as threatening both motivational goals. In these cases RWA and SDO predict whether the security-related or the status-related threat is more relevant for the perceiver (Crawford & Pilanski, 2014; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010b; Thomsen, Green, & Sidanius, 2008). However, evidence from survey research suggests that even after controlling for the effect of RWA, SDO still correlates with the explicit belief that the outgroup threatens the conventions and values of the ingroup (e.g. Crawford, Brandt, Inbar, & Mallinas, 2016; Newman, Hartman, & Taber, 2012; Rios, 2013; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2005). This finding does not regularly appear in experimental studies in which the perception of the outgroups is manipulated more subtly by describing the group as either threatening the ingroup's values or its status (Crawford & Pilanski, 2014; Dru, 2007; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010b; Thomsen et al., 2008). From these results, it seems that people with high SDO are not sensitive to the subtle cues of value-threats but perceived threat can increase when they are presented explicitly. This is in line with the assumptions of social dominance theory, according to which members of the dominant group justify their oppressive behavior with legitimizing myths (Pratto et al., 1994). One of the most important legitimizing myths is negative stereotyping, as perceived negative behavior of the outgroup provides an explanation and justification for the necessity of their oppression (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Since RWA and SDO can be regarded as two independent motivational bases for the harsh and discriminatory treatment of target groups, it is reasonable to assume that these individual-level traits also predict the moral exclusion of outgroups, as a precondition to inhumanly (and immorally) treating them. Passini and Morselli (2017) found that general moral exclusion of outgroups correlated with both RWA and SDO. In an earlier study Passini (2008) found that symptoms of moral exclusion of an outgroup (e.g. labeling, explicit attack) were related to both RWA and SDO. Correspondingly, Gerber and Jackson (2013) reported that RWA and SDO correlated with the opinion that law-breakers were not entitled to procedural fairness, consequently their exclusion from one's personal scope of justice is justified.

As negative stereotypes about norm-violating behavior are related to both moral exclusion and the motivated attitudinal clusters of RWA and SDO, it is reasonable to assume that these stereotypes play an important role in the connection between both motivational goals described by the dual-process model (Duckitt, 2001) and the moral exclusion of outgroups. It can be a particularly important relationship pattern in the case of those "dissident" groups (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007) that are perceived as threatening the hierarchical status quo and conventional social norms simultaneously. In their case, stereotypes can provide a meaningful justification for both an RWA-based or an SDO-based moral exclusion, although with slightly different potential underlying motivated cognitive processes.

RWA is rooted in the need for security and predictability, and people with this need are especially sensitive to the cultural or symbolic threats from other groups. In such a case, negative stereotypes emphasizing non-normative misbehavior might be sufficient justifications for giving up moral concerns toward members of the outgroup, as these stereotypes highlight specifically those characteristics of the outgroup that frustrate the RWA-based needs of the perceiver. In the case of SDO, the relevant threat is not the norm-violation per se, but the perceived competitive behavior of the other group. Nonetheless, if a particular outgroup represents both forms of threats at the same time,

those with a high level of SDO can still rely on stereotypes emphasizing non-normative misbehavior as the justification for moral exclusion if expressed openly, despite not being sensitive to the perceptual cues of this kind of threat in general. However, as in this case, there is a motivational mismatch between SDO and the justification itself, it can therefore be assumed that the mediational power of the justification is weaker.

The context and overview of our study

In our study, we tested whether both the psychological traits of RWA and SDO can serve as the motivational bases for the moral exclusion of outgroups, and whether both traits are related to the tendency to use negative stereotypes about norm-violations as justifications for moral exclusion. We assumed that the mediational role of stereotypes about norm-violating behavior is central in the relationship between RWA and moral exclusion because of the motivational match between RWA and the justifying role of these stereotypes. However, the same mediational role was hypothesized to be less important, although still observable, in the relationship between SDO and moral exclusion. We tested these relationship patterns in the case of the moral exclusion of three different social groups: the Muslims, the Jews, and the Roma people in Hungary.

We chose these three intergroup contexts for the following reasons. These groups occupy vastly different socioeconomic and cultural positions within Hungarian society, yet, prejudice against all three groups reflect severe social and political issues representing the most important and most prevalent forms of stereotyping, moral exclusion, and prejudice in Hungary. While anti-Semitism and anti-Roma attitudes are traditionally present and widely studied forms of prejudice in Hungary, anti-Muslim prejudice is a newly emerging phenomenon.

Roma people are an ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse group making up about 5–8% of Hungarian population (Pásztor & Pénzes, 2013) with a long history of severe discrimination, marginalization, and poverty (Feischmidt, Szombati, & Szuhay, 2013). Members of the Hungarian majority hold strong negative attitudes towards them that is expressed in blatantly negative ways reflecting stereotypes about laziness, criminality, and receiving undeserved benefits from the state (Enyedi, Fábián, & Sik, 2004; Kende, Hadarics, & Lášticová, 2017). In contrast, anti-Semitism is less normative and less widespread, and serves symbolic and ideological functions, as it is not manifested in direct discrimination either on a personal or on an institutional level. Anti-Semitism appears in heterogeneous forms including anti-religious attitudes, and cognitive-affective stereotypes, like beliefs in Jewish conspiracy or inducing guilt in the majority society (Kovács, 2010). Prior to 2015 when the government launched a large-scale anti-immigrant campaign, anti-Muslim prejudice was mostly connected to general levels of xenophobia, as Hungary has less than 0.1% Muslim population or practically no immigration from Muslim countries (Pew Research Center, 2010). Anti-Muslim prejudice can be directly linked to the politicized discourse about immigration, and relatedly to the "terrorist threat narrative" utilized by both domestic and European politics (Simonovits & Bernáth, 2016). Anti-Muslim prejudice is mostly described as containing elements of anti-religiousness, racism, and intolerance toward immigration from outside Europe (Lee et al., 2013; Strabac, Aalberg, & Valenta, 2014). In summary, considering the differences in the degree of hostility, in its expression, and even the most prevalent stereotypes about these groups, testing our hypotheses in three different intergroup contexts can increase the generalizability of our conclusions in line with the suggestions about replications put forward following the recent awareness in our field (e.g., Nosek, Spies, & Motyl, 2012).

Participants

Data was collected from two samples. Our assumptions regarding the moral exclusion of Roma people and Jews were tested based on participants' responses from Sample 1, while the same assumptions regarding the moral exclusion of the Muslims were tested in Sample 2. Despite the

fact that data was retrieved from two different data collections, we decided to present our results within the confines of a single study, as they served the purpose of testing the same hypothesis regarding the antecedents of moral exclusion independently from the target group. Hence the use of two different data pools allowed for more conservative conclusions regarding our hypothesis.

Sample 1 consisted of 441 Hungarian university students from Eötvös Loránd University who received extra credits for their participation in the study (283 female, M_{age} = 21.75; SD_{age} = 3.53). Sample 2 consisted of 176 respondents from Hungary, recruited by convenience sampling by university students who took part in an introductory social psychology course (126 female, M_{age} = 26.93; SD_{age} = 8.98). In terms of their educational background, 36.7% reported "completed university education", 34% indicated "ongoing university education", 22.6% had "completed secondary education", and 6.7% reported "completed primary education or lower".

Measures

Participants completed an online omnibus questionnaire measuring right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, negative stereotypes against the three groups mentioned above, and the moral exclusion of these social groups. Responses were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) on all items. The sequence of the prejudice scales in the questionnaire was randomized in order to prevent any priming effects.

Right-wing authoritarianism was measured by six items of the RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1981). These particular items were taken from a shortened Hungarian version of the scale translated and adapted by Enyedi (1996). According to a pilot study (N = 401) the correlation between our 6-item version and the original form of the Hungarian scale was adequately high (r = .93).[1] For assessing social dominance orientation, we applied a shortened 8-item Hungarian version of the SDO7 scale (Ho et al., 2015; adapted by Faragó & Kende, 2017).

We selected scales that tap into the most prevalent stereotypes about the particular target group in order to show that it is the perceived characteristics of the group that serve as a justification of moral exclusion. Negative stereotypes about Roma people were measured by the so called "Blatant stereotyping" subscale of the Hungarian version of the Attitudes toward Roma Scale (ATRS; Kende et al., 2017). Items of this scale refer to commonly shared stereotypes about criminality and laziness (i.e., non-conventional behavior) and threatening behavior of Roma people (example items: "Roma people tend to make more criminal acts than other people"; "Roma people usually have a lot of children, for which they do not give enough care"). Negative stereotypes about Jews were assessed by 12 items from Bilewicz, Winiewski, Kofta, and Wójcik's (2013) scale originally used in Poland and translated by Hirschberger, Kende, and Weinstein (2016) to Hungarian. These items also tap into perceived non-normative and threatening behaviors of Jewish people, such as the tendency for conspirations (example items: "Jews act in a secret way."; "Jews use Christian blood for ritual purposes."). Negative stereotypes about Muslims were measures by the "Cognitive" subscale of the Islamophobia Scale (Lee et al., 2013). These items measure whether respondents think that Muslims represent a threat to their culture and security, thus the prevalent stereotypes about a hostile and dangerous religion (example items: "Islam is anti-Hungarian."; "I believe that Muslims support the killings of all non-Muslims.").

For measuring moral exclusion of the three target groups we adopted Opotow's (1993) Scope of Justice/Moral Exclusion Scale. The scale consists of three items: (1) belief that considerations of fairness apply to others, (2) willingness to make personal sacrifices to help or to foster another's well-being, and (3) willingness to allocate a share of community resources to another that we used for each target group (example items: "I believe that considerations of fairness apply to Jews/Roma/Muslims too"; "I am willing to make personal sacrifices to help or foster Jews/Roma/Muslim people's well-being"; "I am willing to allocate a share of community resources to Jewish/Roma/Muslim people"). Since higher scores on the original scale indicate higher levels of moral inclusion (vs. exclusion), the final scores for these items were reversed to the direction of exclusion. Information

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables.

Variable		Mean	*SD*	α	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Sample 1									
1.	RWA	2.54	1.05	.76					
2.	SDO	2.90	1.06	.85	.48***				
3.	Anti-semitism	2.86	1.30	.92	.49***	.41***			
4.	Blatant stereotyping (Roma)	4.32	1.40	.89	.41***	.46***	.52***		
5.	Moral exclusion – Jews	3.80	1.17	.73	.37***	.41***	.54***	.49***	
6.	Moral exclusion – Roma	3.67	1.20	.75	.36***	.48***	.37***	.68***	.65***
Sample 2									
1.	RWA	2.49	1.15	.77					
2.	SDO	3.05	1.28	.87	.66***				
3.	Islamophobia	3.06	1.72	.95	.52***	.48***			
4.	Moral exclusion – Muslims	3.69	1.42	.79	.56***	.68***	.61***		

Note. *** = $p < .001$

on scale reliability, descriptive statistics, and correlations between the measured variables are displayed in Table 1.

Results

We applied a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach for testing the mediating role of negative stereotypes between the two motivated attitudinal clusters of RWA and SDO and the moral exclusion of the three outgroups. We used the AMOS 23.0 software (Arbuckle, 2014) for all of our SEM analyses. In the course of this procedure we set up a saturated model without any degrees of freedom in the case of each outgroup, where RWA and SDO were allowed to affect moral exclusion both directly and indirectly through the acceptance of negative stereotypes. These saturated models, presented in Figure 1, always show a perfect fit with χ^2, RMSEA, and SRMR values of 0, and a CFI value of 1.

The results of these saturated models showed that both RWA (Muslims: $B = .53$; $SE = .13$; $p < .001$; Jews: $B = .48$; $SE = .06$; $p < .001$; Roma people: $B = .33$; $SE = .06$; $p < .001$) and SDO (Muslims: $B = .33$; $SE = .11$; $p = .003$; Jews: $B = .28$; $SE = .06$; $p < .001$; Roma people: $B = .45$; $SE = .06$; $p < .001$) were significantly related to negative stereotyping, as this latter was related to moral exclusion (Muslims: $B = .29$; $SE = .05$; $p < .001$; Jews: $B = .38$; $SE = .04$; $p < .001$; Roma people: $B = .49$; $SE = .03$; $p < .001$). At the same time, while SDO also showed a significant direct effect on moral exclusion (Muslims: $B = .51$; $SE = .07$; $p < .001$; Jews: $B = .24$; $SE = .05$; $p < .001$; Roma people: $B = .24$; $SE = .05$; $p < .001$), the same direct effect of RWA was not significant (Muslims: $B = .10$; $SE = .09$; $p = .263$; Jews: $B = .07$; $SE = .05$; $p = .201$; Roma people: $B = .03$; $SE = .05$; $p = .452$).

Taken together, these results indicate that the relationship between RWA and moral exclusion is mediated by the acceptance of negative stereotypes, but in the case of SDO both the mediated and the direct effects are important. This finding is also supported by the fact that the perfect fits did not deteriorate significantly when we removed the direct connections between RWA and moral exclusion (Roma people: $\chi^2 = .57$; $df = 1$; CFI = .999; RMSEA = .002; SRMR = .006; $\Delta\chi^2 = .57$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p = .450$; Jews: $\chi^2 = 1.63$; $df = 1$; CFI = .999; RMSEA = .039; SRMR = .013; $\Delta\chi^2 = 1.63$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p = .201$; Muslims: $\chi^2 = 1.25$; $df = 1$; CFI = .999; RMSEA = .038; SRMR = .012; $\Delta\chi^2 = 1.25$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p = .263$). On the other hand, the drop was significant if we removed the direct link between SDO and moral exclusion (Roma people: $\chi^2 = 26.40$; $df = 1$; CFI = .953; RMSEA = .240; SRMR = .046; $\Delta\chi^2 = 26.41$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .001$; Jews: $\chi^2 = 22.14$; $df = 1$; CFI = .952; RMSEA = .219; SRMR = .050; $\Delta\chi^2 = 22.14$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .001$; Muslims: $\chi^2 = 40.65$; $df = 1$; CFI = .869; RMSEA = .476; SRMR = .078; $\Delta\chi^2 = 40.65$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .001$).

To reveal the extent to which the relationships between the two motivated attitude clusters and moral exclusion is mediated by negative stereotyping in the saturated models, a series of mediational analyses was conducted with the bootstrapping technique as suggested by Macho and Ledermann (2011), where we requested 95% confidence intervals using 2000 resamples. An indirect effect is

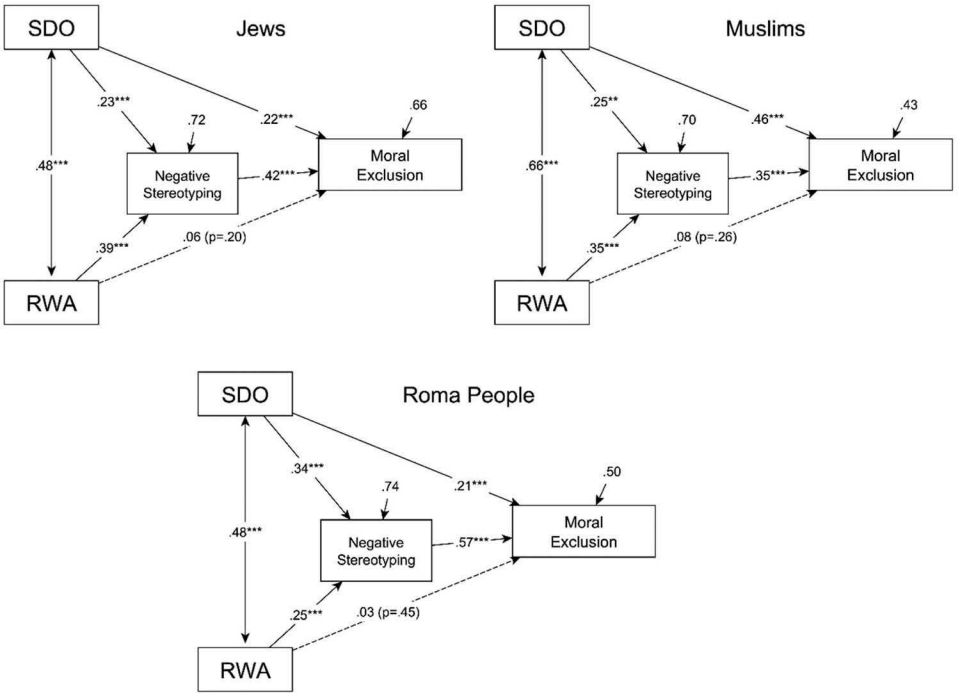

Figure 1. Path models showing relationships between right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, negative stereotyping, and moral exclusion. Path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients of the full model (*** = $p < .001$; ** = $p = .003$).

Table 2. Indirect effects on moral exclusion mediated by negative stereotyping.

Target Group	Predictor	*B*	*SE*	95% Confidence Interval	*β*	95% Confidence Interval	*p*
Roma People	RWA	.16	.04	[.09, .24]	.14	[.09, .21]	< .001
	SDO	.22	.04	[.15, .30]	.19	[.14, .26]	< .001
Jews	RWA	.18	.03	[.13, .25]	.16	[.12, .22]	< .001
	SDO	.11	.03	[.05, .16]	.10	[.05, .15]	< .001
Muslims	RWA	.16	.05	[.07, .28]	.12	[.06, .22]	< .001
	SDO	.10	.04	[.03, .17]	.09	[.03, .16]	.005

considered significant if the unstandardized 95% confidence interval around the estimate does not contain 0. As the results of this mediation analysis show (see Table 2), both RWA and SDO showed a significant indirect effect on moral exclusion mediated by negative stereotyping in each case. However, when we compared the proportion of the indirect effects (see Table 2) and the direct effects (see Figure 1) within the total effects of RWA (Roma people: $B = .20$; $SE = .06$; $\beta = .17$; $p < .001$; Jews: $B = .25$; $SE = .06$; $\beta = .22$; $p < .001$; Muslims: $B = .25$; $SE = .08$; $\beta = .20$; $p < .001$) and SDO (Roma people: $B = .46$; $SE = .05$; $\beta = .40$; $p < .001$; Jews: $B = .34$; $SE = .06$; $\beta = .31$; $p < .001$; Muslims: $B = .61$; $SE = .07$; $\beta = .54$; $p < .001$) on moral exclusion, we found the proportion of the indirect effects (vs. the direct effects) of RWA to be always bigger (Roma people: 82.45%; Jews: 72.76%; Muslims: 61.69%), which pattern was directly the opposite in the case of SDO (Roma people: 47.52%; Jews: 30.54%; Muslims: 15.99%).

Taken together, our results support the assumption that the relationship between RWA and moral exclusion of non-conventional outgroups is mainly mediated by the acceptance of stereotypes emphasizing norm-violations that are specific to the target group. Furthermore, although the same

mediational role of negative stereotyping is observable in the case of the relationship between SDO and moral exclusion, its role in the overall relationship pattern is less important than in the case of RWA.

Discussion

We hypothesized that both RWA and SDO would have a positive relationship with moral exclusion, and negative stereotypes about non-conforming misbehavior mediate this relationship. Our results supported this hypothesis in connection with three target groups with which people associate different negative stereotypes of norm-violating behavior. We also presumed and found that negative stereotyping would mediate the relationship between both motivated attitudinal clusters (RWA and SDO) and moral exclusion, but this mediation would more important in for RWA than for SDO.

The study presented here is in line with previous research that also found a significant relationship between these two attitude clusters and moral exclusion (e.g. Passini, 2008; Passini & Morselli, 2016, 2017), indicating that people with these motivational goals tend to close off non-conventional outgroups from their personal scope of justice, and regard them as unworthy for moral considerations. However, we supplemented previous research by explaining this nexus within a motivated social cognition framework, and showed that negative stereotypes related to the particular target groups are used as the justification for the motivated exclusionary practices. While the stereotypes may have been entirely different for the three target groups, they fulfilled the same psychological function.

Negative stereotypes were key mediators in the relationship between RWA and moral exclusion. This relationship-pattern fits with the dominant motives related to RWA, that is, the personal need for security and predictability is granted by the maintenance of conventional norms and values (e.g. Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2009). Consequently, the perception of the outgroup as violating the ingroup's norms and values authorizes people to disregard moral concerns and responsibilities towards them.

The same stereotypes partially mediated the relationship between SDO and moral exclusion, but a significant direct effect remained in the case of each outgroup. Respondents with a strong motivation to achieve or maintain a dominant group position tended to place rival outgroups outside the boundaries of moral rules and responsibilities. Negative stereotypes served as effective justifications for moral exclusion in this case too. However, the remaining direct effect between SDO and moral exclusion suggests that the acceptance of these negative stereotypes was not the only reason for excluding these outgroups from one's scope of moral concerns.

It is conceivable that those with a high level of SDO used other justifications for moral exclusion that were not measured in our study. Some of these justifications might be connected to the specific group in the form of severe degradation (see Costello & Hodson, 2011; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007) while others might be more general and universal, such as right-wing ideologies (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), ingroup glorification (Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010) or meritocratic beliefs (Pratto, Stallworth, & Conway-Lanz, 1998). People scoring high on SDO may endorse other stereotypes to justify the moral exclusion of outgroups beside those reflecting norm-violations.

Additionally, we cannot rule out the possibility that the effect of SDO on moral exclusion remains partially direct simply out of a stronger need for social dominance. In this case, there is no need for specific justification for moral exclusion, and moral exclusion can be an effective tool for intergroup oppression. Accordingly, it is not surprising that those who strive for the top-dog position use moral exclusion to keep others lower in the hierarchy. At the same time, it might be not an unconditional necessity for them to justify this exclusionary practice. Previous research has showed that concerns for justice and morality are less important for people with a higher level of SDO, while RWA correlates with the subjective importance of several moral values (Federico, Weber, Ergun, & Hunt, 2013; Hadarics & Kende, 2017; Hardy, Bhattacharjee, Reed, & Aquino, 2010; Kugler, Jost, &

Noorbaloochi, 2014; Milojev et al., 2014; Sawaoka, Newheiser, & Dovidio, 2014; Son Hing, Bobocel, Zanna, & McBride, 2007). This general connection between SDO and less moral concerns can enhance the feeling that the person is not bound by any moral standards or obligations when keeping other groups at their place, they endorse exclusionary behavior without needing any justifications or rationalizations. On the other hand, justification seems to be important for people with a high level of RWA, which is not surprising given their strong preference for collectivist moral values and principles (Federico et al., 2013; Hadarics & Kende, 2017; Kugler et al., 2014; Milojev et al., 2014).

In addition to confirming our hypothesis about the justifications of moral exclusion based on negative stereotypes, our findings also showed that the subjective power of a specific justification derives from the motivational compatibility between the frustrated goal and the justification itself. From the perspective of RWA, we can say that there is a complete compatibility between the frustrated need for security and the stereotypes about norm-violating misbehaviors, therefore, the subjective significance of this justification for moral exclusion is strong. However, from the perspective of SDO, the fit is not perfect, as norm-violating misbehavior is not directly related to the frustrated need for dominance, their role is less important. Nevertheless, these stereotypes still provide justifications for moral exclusion and negative treatment related to the frustrated motivations, but in this case the subjective power of this sort of justification is not exclusive. This assumption is supported by the fact that although people with a high level of SDO do not seem to be sensitive to the more subtle cues for symbolic threats manipulated experimentally (Crawford & Pilanski, 2014; Dru, 2007; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010b; Thomsen et al., 2008), they tend to agree with explicit beliefs describing these threats (Crawford et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2012; Rios, 2013; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2005).

Limitations and future directions

The study presented here suffers from some limitations that affect generalizability of our findings. Although we were able to replicate the same relationship pattern for the three target groups within two different samples, both of our samples consisted of Hungarian respondents, and in both samples women were overrepresented. Furthermore, in this study we tested the potential mediating role exclusively for negative stereotypes highlighting norm-violations. This justification proved to be relevant in the case of both motivational goals indicated by RWA and SDO, however, it is likely that other forms of justifications also play a role in moral exclusion for people with high SDO. Such justifications can be stereotypes that describe outgroups as extremely incompetent, subordinate, inferior, or even inhuman. Groups in a derogated position are typical targets of prejudice for those with a high level of SDO (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007). For this reason, future research should test the potential justifying role of other types of stereotypes in moral exclusion too.

Another potential line of research could relate RWA and SDO to different mechanisms of moral exclusion. Olson, Cheung, Conway, Hutchison, and Hafer (2011) argue that the concept of moral exclusion refers to two distinct mechanisms. In the first mechanism, moral exclusion refers to the belief that a moral principle of justice does not apply to the target. It mostly occurs when people fail or refuse to recognize the moral responsibilities towards the target, and it is generally due to the low identification with them. According to the second mechanism, moral exclusion also occurs when the target is considered to deserve the negative treatment, or in other words, moral exclusion and subsequent mistreatment is justified by the perceived misbehavior of the target. In this case, negative behavior is based on the moral principle of deservingness. It is reasonable to assume and to test in further studies that SDO, as a general preference for greater hierarchical distances, is more closely related to the first mechanism, while RWA can serve as a motivational base for the second one, since authoritarians are more sensitive to others' norm-violating wrong-doings.

Finally, it should be noted that moral exclusion can be considered the final step before the factual harsh treatment of the excluded victim groups, and in this sense, it can function as a justification or

legitimizing myth for the discriminatory behavior on its own right (see Lima-Nunes et al., 2013a). Further studies could investigate how the two types of authoritarians use moral exclusion for legitimizing discriminatory behavior and the circumstances under which they use it to justify immoral acts towards other groups.

Conclusion

Based on our findings, it is reasonable to assume that moral exclusion can be and ought to be interpreted as a result of a motivated process. Therefore, for a better understanding of moral exclusion, we need to understand the personal needs and motivations of people *not* to feel obliged to treat members of a group with the same respect and dignity as others.

If our specific motivational goals, like security or dominance, are frustrated by a particular outgroup, the moral exclusion of that group can be an effective tool to stop the frustration. However, this is done at the expense of the outgroup's treatment. Harsh treatment of an outgroup becomes easier if people do not have to consider any moral standards while dealing with those groups that frustrate their personal motives and psychological needs. Nevertheless, as it seems, specific frustrated motives can determine the efficiency of specific justifications for moral exclusion. This difference was evident in the case of RWA and SDO, since moral exclusion was fully justified by negative stereotypes emphasizing norm-violating behavior for those with a high level of RWA, while it was just a partial justification for those with a high SDO.

Our findings highlight the common psychological processes that lead to the moral exclusion of groups that people hold negative stereotypes about: regardless whether this group is a large and visible minority group affected by poverty or discrimination such as Roma people, or they are targets of indirect political and social exclusion on ideological and symbolic grounds, such as Jews, or perceived as a threatening outgroup not worthy of human treatment even in their physical absence, as in the case of Muslim people in Hungary. Understanding the function of these stereotypes can highlight the importance of combatting their widespread appearance within public discourse, and understanding the process of moral exclusion allows us to predict and influence decisions about intergroup relations both on a personal level and on the level of global politics too.

Notes

1. This pilot study was based on a dataset derived from a previous study (Hadarics & Kende, 2017) that incorporated the full version of this Hungarian RWA scale (Enyedi, 1996). In order to construct a short and reliable scale to measure right-wing authoritarianism we asked participants of an introductory social psychology course (N = 21) to rank-order the items of the original Hungarian scale (Enyedi, 1996) according to their appropriateness for measuring RWA. Based on these evaluations we took the most appropriate six items and tested how effectively we can predict the score of the full scale by these items. Based on the mentioned dataset (N = 401), we found a very high correlation between the short and the full version (r = .93). Furthermore, as an indication for convergent validity, we also found very similar correlations with variables like SDO (r = .315; p < .001), binding moral foundations (r = .458; p < .001), and evaluations of dangerous (r = -.430; p < .001) and dissident outgroups (r = -.648; p < .001) as in the case of the original longer version of the scale (see Hadarics & Kende, 2017).

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Ethical approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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